

Health care in America is in crisis. Nearly 50 million Americans are uninsured—including almost 9 million children. Even for those who have coverage, the cost of insurance is becoming more and more expensive, and the cost of prescription drugs continues to spiral out of control. Our number of uninsured is unacceptable and sets the United States apart from the rest of the industrialized world.

Preserving and expanding access to health care has been a top priority for me in Congress. While I am ultimately committed to moving the United States towards a system that would provide health care for all Americans, in the short term I have been actively involved in the following health care initiatives that expand access to good quality, reliable health care:

Community Health Centers (CHCs) - I serve as a member of the Congressional Community Health Center Caucus, which works to increase funding for community health centers and to open more of them throughout the nation. CHCs provide critical services, including preventative care, to the most vulnerable populations who aren't receiving necessary medical services elsewhere. CHCs are one of the most efficient ways to provide health care to the poor and underserved.

State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) - SCHIP currently provides affordable health insurance to approximately 6 million children who would otherwise have no insurance. An additional 6 million children are currently eligible for SCHIP or Medicaid coverage, but not enrolled. This is unacceptable. The morality of our society rests on what we choose to do for our children. We should do everything that we can to ensure they grow up to be healthy, productive members of it.

MassHealth - Massachusetts health care reform law was enacted in 2006, and requires nearly every resident of Massachusetts to obtain or purchase health insurance coverage. Through the law, Massachusetts provides nearly free health care for residents earning less than the federal poverty line, and subsidizes access to health care for those earning up to three times the poverty threshold. As of the end of 2007, the law is credited with covering an additional 300,000 Massachusetts residents. I am proud to represent a state that is a pioneer in the effort to provide health care for all.